

**COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT
BASIN PLAN AMENDMENT TO PROHIBIT SEPTIC TANK DISCHARGES
IN THE TOWN OF YUCCA VALLEY**

The following representatives of organizations submitted written comments on the Draft Prohibition of Septic Tank Discharges in the Town of Yucca Valley:

Letter	Signatory	Affiliation	Date Received
A	Dan Cain	Yucca Valley Resident	12/28/10
B	Charles Newman	Yucca Valley Resident	12/29/10
C	Elizabeth Karman	Stop Yucca Mesa Annexation Coalition Watchdogs	1/24/11
D	R.G. Brown	Shatin Heights Resident	1/25/11
E	Robert and Jacqueline Lute	Shatin Heights Resident	1/26/11
F	Monty Finefrodr	Shatin Heights Resident	1/27/11
G	Carol Lovrin, William Washlake	Shatin Heights Resident	1/27/11
H	Richard Lindly	Shatin Heights Resident	1/28/11
I	Paul Bakkom	Shatin Heights Resident	2/2/11
J	Art Miller Jr.	Yucca Valley Resident	2/3/11
K	Kevin Stoll	Yucca Valley Commercial Property Owner	2/9/11
L	Douglas Lauson, Teri Courtney	Shatin Heights Resident	2/12/11
M	Ed Musik	Hi-Desert Water District	2/14/11
N	Claude Short	Yucca Valley Resident	3/20/11
O	Ronald Reitenauer	Yucca Valley Resident	4/19/11
P	Claude Short	Yucca Valley Resident	4/24/11
Q	Dave Mahaffey	Action Pumping	5/19/11

COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

Written comments on the Draft Prohibition of Septic Tank Discharges in the Town of Yucca Valley are reproduced on the following pages. The responses to these comments are contained in a separate companion document. To assist in referencing comments and responses, the following coding system is used:

Comment letters are coded by letters and each issue raised in the comment letter is assigned a number (e.g., Comment Letter A, comment 1: A-1). Corresponding responses, contained in the Comment Responses document, adhere to this system.

Comment letters E through H and L are identical form letters and have therefore been combined (E-H & L).

Letter A

December 23, 2010

Jon Rokke
73-720 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 100
Palm Desert, CA 92260.

RE: "BPA Prohibition of Septic Tank Discharges in the Town of Yucca Valley"

Hi Jon,

I have the following questions regarding the proposed prohibition of septic tanks in Yucca Valley. It is my understanding that the cost per home will be approximately \$10,000.

- 1) Does this include connection fees?
- 2) Sewer use fees?
- 3) Who is responsible for the cost of extending sewer from the tank to the street?
- 4) What happens when the septic tank is in the rear of the house and a new lateral has to be run to the street, normally a long distance? What keeps the solids from settling out before they get to the street? Or will solids management be the responsibility of the home owner and the new laterals to the street will only carry secondary effluent?
- 5) Who pays for the abandonment of the septic tank?
- 6) We just installed a new septic tank. When would we have to connect to the sewer system, or can we wait until the tank fails?

A-1

A-2

A-3

A-4

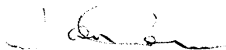
A-5

A-6

We are also concerned about the real estate market for Yucca Valley with these high costs. Thanks for taking the time to address my questions. I anxiously await your answers.

A-7

Regards,



Dan Cain
8802 Rubidoux Ave
Yucca Valley, CA., 92284

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DEC 23 2010

RECEIVED

Letter B

12/27/10

John Rokke
Resource Control Engineer
RWQCB
7320 Fred Waring Drive # 100
Palm Desert, CA 92260
"BPA Prohibition of septic tank discharges
in the Town Of Yucca Valley"

Dear Mr. Rokke:

I am totally against shutting down the Septic tanks in Yucca Valley, CA. My wife and I are Seniors, and we do not have an extra \$10,000 laying around to hook up to a needless sewer system at all. A Water Purification System would be far better here in Yucca Valley than this wild and expensive sewer system that has been dreamed up. The Town Of Yucca Valley will become a Ghost Town up here if this mess goes through sir. All of the assessments that go along with this mess for each property owner is just totally overwhelming. Also, to do this sort of thing with the economy where it is now is in my opinion "totally insane" no matter what kind of nonsense the State and the Local Hi Desert Water District tries to shove down the publics throat up here. Your going to have a hard sell up here, and I predict that voters up here will vote this nonsense down right away when you try to do the Vote on it! Years ago, a fresh water line was approved and delivers water here to Yucca Valley by pipeline, so, again, a water purification system would be adequate for this area without question. So, if you and the Water Company Shut down the water here, well, no problem, because you'll just speed up the process of this entire area becoming a nice Ghost Town, that is also Sir what State Assemblyman Paul Cook has predicted as well Sir.

B-1

B-2

B-3

B-4

B-5

Sincerely,

Charles R. Newman
Charles R. Newman
7497 Aster Ave.
Yucca Valley, CA 92284-3706

CC: CRN

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DEC 29 2010

REGION 7

Letter C

>>> Yucca Mesa <stopannex@gmail.com> 1/24/2011 11:21 AM >>>
Mr. Angel:

The residents of Yucca Mesa (a small community north of Yucca Valley serviced by Hi-Desert Water District) recently fought and won our fight to stop Yucca Valley from annexing Yucca Mesa. The Hi-Desert Water District Board also voted and assured the residents of Yucca Mesa that Yucca Mesans would not have to pay for the Town of Yucca Valley's wastewater treatment plant since Yucca Mesa would not benefit from the plant and sewers, nor did Mesans contribute to the groundwater nitrate contamination in Yucca Valley. In addition, Yucca Mesa is in the Ames Basin while Yucca Valley is the Warren Basin.

My questions to you are:

1. Do you agree that Yucca Mesa residents will not be forced by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board to pay for the Town of Yucca Valley's wastewater treatment plant/sewer system?

C-1

2. Do you agree that Yucca Mesa residents will not be forced by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board to hook up to the Town of Yucca Valley's wastewater treatment plant/sewer system?

C-2

3. We understand that a \$1000/day fine will be imposed by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board if residents of Yucca Valley do not vote to assess themselves to pay for a water treatment plant/sewer system. Will each resident in Yucca Valley be fined \$1000/day or will the Town of Yucca Valley be fined \$1000/day, or will Hi-Desert Water District be fined \$1000/day or will all of the above be fined \$1000/day?

C-3

Also, since residents of Yucca Mesa are customers of Hi-Desert Water District, will they be included in the \$1000/day fine?

C-4

In addition, residents of Yucca Mesa want to avoid the water contamination problem Yucca Valley is experiencing. We do not want to have to build a wastewater treatment plant on Yucca Mesa. Please refer me to California Regional Water Quality Control Board

C-5

documentation that outlines proper waste water treatment and building codes that will help Mesans avoid groundwater contamination in the future. (For example, only build X number of houses per acre with a maximum square footage of X, with septic tanks.)

We look forward to your response.

Elizabeth Karman, Co-Founder
Stop Yucca Mesa Annexation Coalition Watchdogs

Letter D



R.G. Brown
AEA • SAG • AFTRA • AGVA

January 23, 2011

California Regional Water Quality Control Board
Colorado River Basin Region
73-720 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 100
Palm Desert, CA 92260

Attn: Jon Rokke

Hi-Desert Water District
55439 29 Palms Hwy
Yucca Valley, CA 92284

Attn: Sarann Graham

Re: BPA Prohibition of Septic Tank Discharges in the Town of
Yucca Valley, CA

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The homeowners in the SHATIN HEIGHTS HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION, P.O. Box 1467 Yucca Valley CA 92286, are expressing concerns regarding the installation of the above referenced sewer system in our area. We are in a particularly unique area of approximately 2-1/2 acre lots on hilly, granite ground. As stated, our terrain is very hilly, the ground is extremely difficult to dig in and our lots are covered with large boulders. We have 34 occupied home sites of which several are not year round residents. The remaining 27 sites have not been developed and perhaps the reason may be due to the typography that would not allow construction without a tremendous expense for development. Several of our homeowners had to extend their leach lines in order to allow the proper drainage leading us to wonder if any seepage would even work its way down toward the town. We are unable to find in any of the USGS reports provided to us for our area that states that our septs contribute to the problem.

It is our understanding that the electrical utility company was given an exemption to install overhead lines due to the severe nature of digging in this area. It is also our understanding that the water company had to blast in order to run the water lines.

As homeowners we are concerned the expense of connecting to the sewer line would be extremely costly and the engineering would be extremely involved as the grades are steep. We are therefore asking for an exemption in installing the sewer lines in our area due to the above stated reasons.

P.S. Please answer ASAP!
At address listed below...

R. G. BROWN
RECEIVED
JAN 25 2011
2011/01/27

57586 Buena Suerte Rd., Yucca Valley, CA 92284
Res. (760) 369-1710 FAX (760) 369-1910

D-1

D-2

D-3

D-4

D-5

Letters E-H & L

SHATIN HEIGHTS HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION
P. O. Box 1467 Yucca Valley, CA 92284

January 20, 2011

California Regional Water Quality Control Board
Colorado River Basin Region
73-720 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 100
Palm Desert, CA 92260

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JAN 26 2011
FEDERAL

Attn: Jon Rokke

Re: BPA Prohibition of Septic Tank Discharges in the Town of Yucca Valley

Hi-Desert Water District
55439 29 Palms Hwy
Yucca Valley, CA 92284

Gentlemen:

The undersigned homeowners in the Shatin Heights area of Yucca Valley are expressing concerns regarding the installation of the above referenced sewer system in our area. We are in a particularly unique area of approximately 2-1/2 acre lots on hilly, granite ground. As stated, our terrain is very hilly, the ground is extremely difficult to dig in and our lots are covered with large boulders. We have 34 occupied home sites of which several are not year round residents. The remaining 27 sites have not been developed and perhaps the reason may be due to the typography that would not allow construction without a tremendous expense for development. Several of our homeowners had to extend their leach lines in order to allow the proper drainage leading us to wonder if any seepage would even work its way down toward the town. We are unable to find in any of the USGS reports provided to us for our area that states that our septic contribute to the problem.

EH-1

It is our understanding that the electrical utility company was given an exemption to install overhead lines due to the severe nature of digging in this area. It is also our understanding that the water company had to blast in order to run the water lines.

EH-2

EH-3

EH-4

As homeowners we are concerned the expense of connecting to the sewer line would be extremely costly and the engineering would be extremely involved as the grades are steep. We are therefore asking for an exemption in installing the sewer lines in our area due to the above stated reasons.

EH-5

~~Attachment~~

Jequeline Sue Lute

Truck 8750 Lot 9

57579 Buena Vista Rd

Robert H Lute

Yucca Valley, CA 92284

Letter I

MEMBER

SHATIN HEIGHTS HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION
P. O. Box 1467 Yucca Valley, CA 92284

copy

January 20, 2011

California Regional Water Quality Control Board
Colorado River Basin Region
73-720 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 100
Palm Desert, CA 92260

Attn: Jon Rokke

Re: BPA Prohibition of Septic Tank Discharges in the Town of Yucca Valley

Hi-Desert Water District
55439 29 Palms Hwy
Yucca Valley, CA 92284

Gentlemen:

The undersigned homeowners in the Shatin Heights area of Yucca Valley are expressing concerns regarding the installation of the above referenced sewer system in our area. We are in a particularly unique area of approximately 2-1/2 acre lots on hilly, granite ground. As stated, our terrain is very hilly, the ground is extremely difficult to dig in and our lots are covered with large boulders. We have 34 occupied home sites of which several are not year round residents. The remaining 27 sites have not been developed and perhaps the reason may be due to the typography that would not allow construction without a tremendous expense for development. Several of our homeowners had to extend their leach lines in order to allow the proper drainage leading us to wonder if any seepage would even work its way down toward the town. We are unable to find in any of the USGS reports provided to us for our area that states that our septs contribute to the problem.

It is our understanding that the electrical utility company was given an exemption to install overhead lines due to the severe nature of digging in this area. It is also our understanding that the water company had to blast in order to run the water lines.

As homeowners we are concerned the expense of connecting to the sewer line would be extremely costly and the engineering would be extremely involved as the grades are steep. We are therefore asking for an exemption in installing the sewer lines in our area due to the above stated reasons.

Jon Rokke
Attachment

Written Addendum also added

pg 2.

Thanks
Paul

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FEB 02 2011

REGION 7

Letter I Continued

Homeowners in Shatin Heights (Tract No. 8750) requesting exemption:

Richard Lindly Richard Lindly 57721 BANDERA Rd. 92284

Paul B. Bakton Paul B. Bakton 5879 ULU court 92284

* Addendum

Shatin Heights is located in an east-west trending hill formation created by granitic intrusion. As the magma cooled just below the surface, it created a sub surface of large boulders and bedrock just below the surface. (The massive rock formations of Joshua Tree National Park were formed the same approx time period.) In addition to the electrical line and water line problems mentioned on the previous page, phone lines are routinely severed when grading the dirt streets. On Ulu Court, where bedrock composes the upper part of the street, our phone line was buried in the berm on the side of the road. The line was covered with less than a foot of dirt. It could not be buried deeper without hitting bedrock.

I-1

Thank you *Paul B. Bakton*

Letter J

**Art Miller, Jr.
PO Box 820
Yucca Valley, CA 92286**

February 3, 2011

California Regional Water Quality Control Board
Colorado River Basin Region
73-720 Fred Waring Dr., Suite 100
Palm Desert, CA 92260
Attention: John Rokke

Dear Mr. Rokke,

As a longtime resident, developer, property owner and businessman of Yucca Valley, I am well aware of your agency's concerns regarding Yucca Valley's need of a wastewater facility to protect the current and future groundwater of our community.

I'd like to state that there are certain areas located on the north side of Yucca Valley that are either low density and or have an extreme rocky terrain. To establish the existing infrastructure in some of these areas, the use of heavy equipment and blasting were necessary to root out enough rock to install the current water lines. I am a property owner of 5837 Olema Road which is in one of these areas and currently included in Phase 3 of the current wastewater plan. I feel that this area should be exempt from any future sewer hookup plans, and my reason for this is that my septic being high in the hills above the valley floor has little or no effect on the current ground water. In addition, the wastewater line construction costs would be much higher, in this area do to the terrain in comparison to that of Phase 1. This is only an unsubstantiated personal opinion. I do believe that I am going to benefit from cleaner water, so I am willing to pay something towards the total cost of the wastewater facility.

J-1

J-2

Regarding the cost, the State of California who is mandating this wastewater system be built within a certain time period should give Yucca Valley a higher priority in any current bond money or grants that are now available. Yucca Valley is a low income community and to convince this community of the need for the wastewater system is a larger undertaking than convincing a community who may only be expanding an existing system. Your board charter may not allow you do this, however in our case it should be a consideration.

J-3

Thank you to you and your board for allowing me to make these comments. If you have any further questions or wish to discuss my opinions further please do not hesitate to call me.

Sincerely,


Art Miller, Jr.
Yucca Valley, CA
760-365-3984

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FEB 07 2011

REGION 17

Letter K

RE: Yucca Valley

Page 1 of 3

Jon Rokke - RE: Yucca Valley

From: "Stoll, Kevin" <kevinstoll3@gmail.com>
To: jrokke@waterboards.ca.gov
Date: 2/9/2011 2:27 PM
Subject: RE: Yucca Valley
Attachments: Watermaster 2009-10 AR.pdf

Jon,

First, thank you for generously spending so much time with me earlier today answering some of my questions regarding the Yucca valley situation and plans. You were most helpful and informative.

1. As we discussed, I am also looking for other information. Were and are the nitrate concentration levels measured in the water that HDWD imported from the MWD for the artificial recharge project? Is there a report that provides this information? How can I get a copy?

K-1

2. I was surprised by your explanation that the reason for the decline in the nitrate levels over the past 10 years is the declining water levels in the Warren Basin. This did not make sense to me given that the data reported by the Warren Valley Basin Valley WaterMaster annual reports does not show declining water levels. Is there another source of data? How can I get a copy?

K-2

Below is a link to all of the WaterMaster reports back to 1992.

<http://www.hdwd.com/Watermaster/AnnualReports.aspx>

And attached is the 2009-10 report. On page 13-23 (pdf page 17-27) shows the 25 year trends for groundwater surface elevation and pages 74-82 shows the 10 year nitrate levels.

<<...>>

3. Item 7 (page 11) of the 2008 MOU between the Town of Yucca Valley, High Desert Water District and California Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWB) the RWB to evaluate alternatives:

7. Regional Water Board Alternatives Analysis:

In accordance with its duties under CEQA, the Regional Water Board shall also evaluate alternatives to requiring residents and businesses to connect to the municipal WRP or to prohibiting the discharge of waste from septic tank treatment and subsurface disposal systems.

Has the RWB issued a report evaluating the alternatives?
How can I review a copy?

K-3

4. It is my understanding that the CEQA checklist is used to evaluate a project's

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Letter K Continued

RE: Yucca Valley

Page 2 of 3

potential impact on the environment and propose abatement and management actions if necessary. The CEQA Checklist provides a good qualitative overview of the alternatives (p.17-20), but there is not a substantive evaluation or analysis of the various alternatives. Given the economic magnitude of the proposed project, I would hope that the evaluation of the alternatives would include the economic analysis of the alternatives - alternatives to the prohibition, no action alternative and the alternative to comply with prohibition. Are there any additional reports or documents evaluating the alternatives?

K-4

Thank you for your assistance.

Kind Regards,

Kevin Stoll
(cell) 949-338-7113

From: Stoll, Kevin [mailto:kevinstoll3@gmail.com]

Sent: Tuesday, 01 February 2011 9:43 PM

To: 'Joan Stormo'

Cc: 'jrokke@waterboards.ca.gov'

Subject: RE: Yucca Valley

Ms. Stormo,

Thank you very much for your prompt reply. I am sure that you are receiving many questions and requests on this plan.

1. I reviewed the CEQA Checklist and page 2 says that Jon Rokke is the contact person (I guessed at his email above). I am not sure who at CWQCB I should be working with to understand impacts of the proposed septic prohibition and the Wastewater Collection and Reclamation Facility.

K-5

2. The CEQA Checklist provides a good qualitative overview of the alternatives (p.17-20), but there is not a substantive evaluation or analysis of the various alternatives. Are there any additional documents evaluating the alternatives?

K-6

3. I also noted a gross error in the Dec. 2010 Staff Report. On page 25, 2nd paragraph: "the estimated capital cost of the WWTP is stated as \$85-128M or \$8,500-12,800 per residence assuming 10,000 water connections." This estimated cost is only for phase 1 and the entire water district has 9,905 water connections (ref HDWD 2010 Annual Report, schedule 6). The total cost of the project (all 3 phases) is \$238M or \$24,000 per connection. The estimated Yucca valley population is approximately 21,000 yields a per capita cost of \$11,300. And this excludes the customer connection costs estimated to be \$3,000 to 5,000 per dwelling.

K-7

<< OLE Object: Picture (Metafile) >>

Please reference the Jan 2009 WRF Preliminary Design Report (appendix A), Jan 2009 Sewer Master Plan (p. 6-2,3,4), and Oct 2008 WRF Prelim Value Engr Study (p.172).

4. Next, the CRWQCB's basis for the prohibition rests largely on the USGS 2003 Report. The report period in question coincided with the plan to replenish the Warren Basin with imported water. This effort has largely been successful in

K-8

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Letter K Continued

RE: Yucca Valley

Page 3 of 3

raising aquifer the water levels by 100 to 200 feet depending on the specific well measurement. However, the elevated nitrate concentrations coincided with this effort and the USGS Report identified that the entrained nitrates were being added as the water level rose. Now that the water levels have stabilized, nitrate concentrations have plunged. The Warren Valley Basis Watermaster data has confirmed this.

**K-8
Cont.**

The Warren Valley Basin Watermaster has continued to report nitrate levels for water taken from area groundwater wells over the past 10 years (reference 2010 Watermaster Annual Report). These readings show that nitrate concentrations peaked in the 2002-03 and have declined from an average of 21 mg/L to 12 mg/L during the past 9 years. Since that the background nitrate concentration levels in the area are approximately 10 (ref USGS Report p.1), there has been an 80+% decrease in nitrate concentration levels over the past 9 years.

K-9

How is the CRWQCB taking into account this recent data?

Is a prohibition the appropriate solution at this point in time?

Should we be monitoring the situation before proceeding with expensive projects?

Thank you for helping educate me and getting me up to speed. I look forward to your reply.

Kind Regards,

Kevin Stoll

(cell) 949-338-7113

Letter M



February 14, 2011

California Environmental Protection Agency
Regional Water Quality Control Board
Colorado River Basin Region
76-720 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 100
Palm Desert, CA 92260
Attention: Jose Angel

Re: Basin Plan Amendment

Dear Mr. Angel:

The Hi-Desert Water District respectfully requests that Phases 2 and 3 be excluded from the current Basin Plan Amendment regarding septic prohibition, until it is determined that these areas are, in fact, polluting our aquifers. Currently, there are no scientific studies available that either support or refute this claim. We have discussed this topic with USGS, and we are currently in the planning stage of a study of Phases 2 and 3. The study will include three main tasks:

1. Site Characterization - this task will involve defining the size and shape of the groundwater basin, describing the basin-fill sediments, and defining groundwater levels and movement. It will include compiling and collecting geophysical data.
2. Data Collection - this task will involve installing unsaturated-zone and saturated-zone monitoring devices to monitor the movement of wastewater through the unsaturated and saturated zones.
3. Model Development and Calibration - this task will involve extending the groundwater-flow and solute transport model developed for the Warren sub-basin to the Phase 2 and 3 areas. It will utilize data compiled and collected in Tasks 1 and 2 to simulate the potential for groundwater contamination related to septic-tank discharge in the Phase 2 and 3 areas.

The expected time frame for completion of the study is 18-24 months. We request that the Regional Water Quality Control Board review the findings of this important study before making a final determination as to whether Phases 2 and/or 3 will be included in the Basin Plan Amendment.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ed Murrik". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Ed Murrik
General Manager

55439 29 Palms Hwy., Yucca Valley, CA 92284-2503 / 760.365.8330 / fax: 760.365.0599 / www.hdwd.com / email: info@hdwd.com



M-1

M-2

Letter N

Written Input On Septic Tank Ban for Yucca Valley, Ca.

To whom it may concern;

I, Claude L. Short, a resident and water rate-payer of Yucca Valley, Ca. disagree with the Proposed Ban on our septic tanks by the Colorado Basin Water Quality Control Board for the following reasons:

1. The financial impact that it would have on our town's people, individually and collectively would cause undue hardship, even with the suggested 'help' for low-income/disadvantaged households from the Hi-Desert Water District.
2. The Colorado Basin Water Quality Control Board (Water Board) is using incomplete and misleading information to cause us to agree with the ban. (See notes below).
3. We do not believe that the Water Board and Hi-Desert Water District are acting in good faith on our behalf. (See notes below).
4. We do not believe that ALL available and reasonable alternatives were considered when proposing the Ban.

N-1

Note: Underlined sentences below are the responses of Ms. Stormo, from the Water Board to the Peer Reviewers. Sentences in italics are MY comments.

Notes

From Peer Reviews of USGS 2003 Report, and Responses from Joan Stormo (Colorado Regional Water Quality Control Board), dated December 9, 2010.

1. (From Dr. Hunt review): **Comment #2**, Dr. Hunt points out the uncertainty of the model used to determine Flow and Transport.

Ms. Stormo agreed.

With this in mind, shouldn't there be more trustworthy and verifiable research conducted in this matter?

N-2

2. **Comment #5**, Dr. Hunt casts doubt on the research by pointing out that ground water data from 2002-2010 "Levels reported are in the range of 10-30 mg/l and that range may represent some steady state value of septic tank discharges and groundwater recharge..." Dr. Hunt goes on to say that groundwater data was not presented for a specific well (Not mentioned in the peer review and response) which does not allow for a determination of whether there may be a reservoir of nitrates in a deeper portion of the aquifer.

Ms. Stormo does not address this issue, but says that it does not affect the Water Boards determination that there is a need for the ban.

If the steady-state has been reached, shouldn't we concentrate on NOT making it worse by looking into alternate methods of dealing with the problem of septage entering the water table? One suggestion would be to identify the MAJOR polluters and deal with them individually. The Air Quality Management Districts do such with respect to automotive/industrial air pollution. The AQMDs have shown that they CAN improve air

N-3

Letter N Continued

quality by focusing on individuals. The Regional Water Board SHOULD be able to do the same with our ground-water.

3. **Comment #6**, Dr. Hunt says that the USGS report indicates considerable water use by the golf course. He further states that there should be an analysis of actual consumptive use of the water in Yucca Valley.

Ms. Stormo replies that the golf course was closed in 2004 and that other steps were taken by Hi-Desert Water district to reduce nutrient loading from landscaping to "insignificant levels."

She does not, however, mention the acres of grass planted in various parks, schools, and community centers in Yucca Valley which require fertilizer and large amounts of water to keep them alive. Additionally, a Consumptive Use Study would help identify the major polluters and provide more data on which the Board could act. It would help to minimize the financial impact on the citizens of Yucca Valley and possibly identify other alternatives which would help improve the groundwater quality.

4. **Comment #8**, Dr. Hunt points out that the Recycle Facility has its own issues: The effluent will subject the basin to increased nutrient loading and SALTS! Then asks if the solution (waste water recycling) will improve the over-all health of the basin.

Ms. Stormo just says it will be monitored.

By whom? Considering the track record of the Hi-Desert Water Districts lack of maintenance of the water systems in our area, we have NO CONFIDENCE that this will be carried out. Also, isn't the ultimate mission of the Board to PROTECT our water? Changing from OWTS to Centralized Sewage Collection only creates further, more severe, problems which will need to be solved through MORE fiscal impact on the citizens of our already burdened town.

We are an earth-quake prone area. Can you imagine the problems which would be created if an earthquake were to tear apart the feeder lines to the sewer system? Or damage the recycling plant? With OSWTS that problem is minimized in case of earthquakes.

1. (From Dr. Boehm review): **Comment #2**, Dr. Boehm indicates that the USGS report **STRONGLY SUPPORTS** the idea that septage from septic tanks is the source of the high nitrates.

Ms. Stormo agrees.

Although the evidence SUPPORTS the assumption that the septic tanks are to blame, it does not pin-point the actual culprit. It leaves room for doubt that the OWTS in our area ARE the problem.

2. **Comment #3**, Dr. Boehm says that the data SUPPORTS the conclusion that septage is the cause of the high nitrates. However, Dr. Boehm points out that further evidence would have "been nice."

Ms. Stormo agrees, but injects that the report INDICATES that septage is the cause.

These statements IMPLY that the septic systems are the cause of the nitrate loads. They do not PROVE it. Other factors are involved which could increase the nitrates in the groundwater.

N-4

N-5

N-6

N-7

N-8

Letter N Continued

3. **Comment #4**, Dr. Boehm points out that the spikes in nitrate levels are coincident with the recharge events.
Ms. Stormo agrees.
So, the people, and the septic tanks, of Yucca Valley are NOT the evil perpetrators of the nitrate problem! Hi-Desert Water District, with the Blessings of the Regional Board, has created the problem.
4. **Comment #5**, Dr. Boehm points out that data collected since the 2003 USGS report indicates that the nitrate levels in the mid-west hydrogeologic unit has declined. Dr. Boehm continues by saying that the limited data does not prove that there will NOT be future groundwater threats OR that the nitrates will continue to vertically migrate.
Ms. Stormo agrees. Ms. Stormo says, "The data does not CONCLUSIVELY indicate..."
My interpretation of Dr. Boehm's comments: The data presented in Appendix D does not prove either point and should not be used as "proof" that our septic systems are the cause of the nitrate concentrations in the ground water. Shouldn't there be SOME form of PROOF to support the theory that our problem is caused by our septic systems BEFORE we have to spend outrageous amounts of money to clean up the problem?
5. **Comment #6**, Dr. Boehm says that the USGS report actually says that the most likely cause of the high nitrates is the RISE IN THE GROUNDWATER LEVEL DUE TO THE ARTIFICIAL RECHARGE PROGRAM. Dr. Boehm continues to say that there was no data on pathogens in the water.
Ms. Stormo agrees.
Again, shouldn't there be more conclusive evidence that the septic systems in our area are the actual CAUSE of the problem?
6. Dr. Boehm (in the original peer review, dated 9 September, 2010) points out that the authors (I assume of the USGS report) freely admit that they used trial and error to choose some model parameters. Dr. Boehm also says that the model provides a "STRONG PIECE OF EVIDENCE" that septage is the source of nitrate...
MS. Stormo does not respond to this.

Conclusion: The Water Board has failed to PROVE that septic systems in the Warren Basin are the actual causes of the high nitrate levels in the ground water. However, they HAVE proved that the ARTIFICIAL GROUNDWATER RECHARGE PROGRAM is causing the problem. Don't you think that the Recharge Program should be looked into a little closer?

Additionally, other areas of concern were not addressed. The Yucca Valley area is inhabited by many animals that use the surface of the desert as urinals. That, combined with the homeless population, and dead/decaying animal and plant remains would also increase the nitrate levels in our area.

Also, the Hi-Desert Water District has instituted a water conservation program which reduces the amount of water used for normal residential irrigation to keep plants alive. This has caused a die-off of grasses, trees and other plants that would help to reduce the nitrogen loading on the water table. In addition, more water on the surface, percolating

N-9

N-10

N-11

N-12

N-13

N-14

Letter N Continued

into the groundwater, SHOULD help to dilute the nitrates as they percolate into the groundwater.

N-14
Cont.

While I agree that some septic systems in the area MAY be failing, I disagree that the whole community should suffer such extensive economic impact when there are other solutions available.

N-15

The U.S.E.P.A. considers properly maintained and functioning septic tanks to be a safe and viable means of disposing of household waste-water. They do not even consider regulation of systems with an output of less than 5000 gallons per day other than proper siting of them.

N-16

Furthermore, abandoning the systems cannot be shown to solve our problems or even keep them from becoming worse in the future.

N-17

Lastly, there have been many references to Los Osos, Ca. We are not comparable to Los Osos in that we are not on any tributary, our groundwater (until recently) was not in danger of contamination, and other environmental factors were not involved (ie. surface waters, sensitive habitats, etc.).

N-18

Many of us see the enforcement of the ban as just another way for 'our government,' and those who are supposed to serve us, to take away more of our rights and our money! The Water Board is using a sledgehammer to solve a problem which would be better handled with a scalpel. With more time and research comes a wider choice of solutions!

N-19

If you MUST take some sort of action, please consider a moratorium on development rather than a Ban on our septic tanks.

N-20

Claude L. Short
7402 Elata Ave.
Yucca Valley, Ca. 92284
(760) 365-8698- Home
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claude@claudescape.com

RECEIVED
MAR 20
REGION 7

Letter O

April 7, 2011

Jon Rokke
City Council Chambers
City of La Quinta
78-495 Calle Tampico
La Quinta, CA 92253

Re: BPA Prohibition of Septic Tank Discharges in the Town of Yucca Valley

Dear Mr. Rokke:

There seems to be general agreement that we need to stop using our existing septic tank discharges in the Town of Yucca Valley.

O-1

The cost estimate for a replacement system is \$125 million for a proposed gravity system, the proven, preferred method of wastewater treatment for a town of our size. While the Town and High Desert Water District are pursuing financing through grants and various methods, the residents of Yucca Valley are faced with major economic concerns as to how to pay for this.

O-2

Your proposed prohibition of septic tank discharges is being imposed as the way to pressure us to eliminate pollution of our groundwater to protect public safety. But this presupposes the town can afford to pay for a wastewater treatment facility. If we cannot, then without discharge allowed from our septic tanks, we are exposed to the considerable cost penalty of pumping our tanks and hauling the waste. This results in an equal economic hardship for the population of Yucca Valley.

O-3

Would it not be an advantage to all concerned to create a more positive atmosphere to resolve this vital issue of public safety? Could the regulatory authority issue a conditional prohibition, the condition being the ability of the town to pay for a replacement system before any time specific prohibition? What good would it do the people of Yucca Valley to punish them if we are not able to afford either a new system or the costs of the penalty? Rather than create a potential negative result benefiting no one, with your power and influence you can help us to achieve our common goal by extending your goodwill in this matter.

O-4

O-5

I am appealing to you to be realistic in your concerns. Consider conditioning your prohibition on the town first obtaining the financing to build a new system, rather than a penalty for not being able to do so. Under this condition it will be necessary for the town to pursue financing with all due diligence as they are currently doing and not ignoring this pressing problem. Certainly you can require progress reports and any monitoring necessary to insure compliance with the conditions.

O-6

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APR 19 2011

REGION 7

Letter O Continued

Additionally, please consider limiting any prohibition of discharge from all septic tanks in Yucca Valley. The outlying areas of the town are remote and, in many cases, severely hampered by the topography of the land. I urge you to consider a complete survey of our area before an overall ban on all tanks. The possibility the ban can be modified in future is not as productive or efficient as considering existing conditions before the prohibition is enacted.

O-7

The threat to us is not your prohibition or the potential resulting penalty. The real threat is from us continuing to pollute our groundwater. If we are people concerned with our own health and well being, we will find a way to pay for a proper system regardless of any prohibitions you might impose. But it will take time and debate to resolve this financing, so I implore you to consider this in your proposed amendment.

O-8

Sincerely yours,



Ronald Reitenauer

7475 San Remo Trail

Yucca Valley, CA 92284

Cc: High Desert Water District

Letter P

(5/4/2011) Jon Rokke - Proposed Ban- Yucca Valley

Page 1

From: Claude SHORT <claude@claudescape.com>
To: <jrokke@waterboards.ca.gov>
Date: 5/4/2011 4:24 PM
Subject: Proposed Ban- Yucca Valley

Mr. Rokke, I have e-mailed you before so I'm sure you know that I (as well as many others in Yucca Valley) oppose the proposed ban on our septic tanks. A total ban on our septic tanks would merely delay further, more expensive, actions by the Regional Water Board. Also, it is not the only solution to the problem in Yucca Valley.

P-1

As I surfed the State Water Board's site, I found that there are numerous citations being issued to waste water treatment plants for excessive pollution.

P-2

Considering the Hi-Desert Water Districts current record of poor maintenance on the water supply end, I find it very hard to believe that they will do any better with our sewage. It seems to me that, given some time, HDWD would be presented with citations for excessive pollution. This would cost the citizens of Yucca Valley a lot of EXTRA money to repair/replace the faulty systems. Additionally, one system, not properly maintained, could cause a higher degree of pollution in our water.

P-3

Individual systems would be much less likely to fail during earthquakes. Individual systems would be much easier, and less expensive to replace, or repair, than a community-wide waste system.

P-4

The USEPA says that our systems ARE able to adequately protect the ground-water if properly placed and serviced. Yet, that was not even considered in your Proposal.

P-5

True, there are systems which were permitted to be sited on parcels where they should never have been. True, they are causing issues with the groundwater. However, it would be better (in my opinion) to deal with those specific polluters, rather than the whole community.

P-6

To ban all septic tanks because of a few poorly performing systems is tantamount to banning all motor vehicles because of a few polluters. The USEPA found a much better solution. It is one that I believe the Regional Board could follow. The USEPA (and California) have adopted a plan to regulate the pollution from motor vehicles on an individual basis. A similar system could be used for septic systems.

P-7

It would be easy enough to verify that each homeowner or business was properly maintaining their systems. Our local septic service companies could simply forward the records to your office for verification. Permits could be renewed every 3 years or so, based on that verification. If the homeowner or business did not comply with the requirements, the individuals involved could be cited and fined. This system would provide a much better way to regulate contamination of our water.

P-8

Consider the alternatives. You are knowledgeable in the operations of sewage treatment plants, so I believe you are aware of the potential problems with air quality, disposal of the solids, transportation issues, etc. None of those would be a concern for the citizens of Yucca Valley OR the Regional Board if they regulated the individual systems.

P-9

Putting regulation into action that focuses on the individual's responsibility would be much easier on everyone than trying to create a whole new sewer system and then trying to regulate it.

P-10

\$\$ Also- think of the money an individually-based system of regulation could generate for the State and local businesses!\$\$ There's potential for fees to renew permits (sort of like the smog certificates on motor vehicles). Also, consider the money that the local companies could charge (every 3 years) for pumping and maintaining the systems. \$\$ Then, think of the money the average consumer could save by NOT having to pay HDWD every month just to do what our systems are already doing! Sounds like a win, win, win situation to me.

P-11

I am requesting that the above issues and solutions be considered by the board prior to any decision to

P-12

Letter P Continued

(5/4/2011) Jon Rokke - Proposed Ban- Yucca Valley

Page 2

ban our tanks.
Thank you,
Claude Short
7402 Elata Ave., Yucca Valley, Ca. 92284
(760) 881-7172
claude@claudecave.com

Jon Rokke - May Regional Board Meeting Response

From: Dave Mahaffey <actionpumpinginc@yahoo.com>
To: Hilda Vasquez <hvasquez@waterboards.ca.gov>
Date: 5/19/2011 4:42 PM
Subject: May Regional Board Meeting Response

C.R.W.Q.C.B.C.R.B.R.

**73-720 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 100
Palm Desert, Ca.**

92260

Attn John Rokke

Resource Control

Engineer

As i spoke of at today's meeting the documents fail to mention that Nitrate is the aftermath signature and that Enteric Bacteria had been present thus being the real cause for blue baby syndrome. This is a science finding in fact blue baby syndrome has been caused by people not washing properly prior to baby feedings. Please take the needed time to do further research.

Q-1

Also of mention at today's meeting and prior meetings there is no mention of pollutants coming in to the Morongo Basin areas water supply by outside of our community's control at this time. We have asked as to how many septic tanks are between the Morongo Basin and the Northern CA. DELTA ? With no answer we are very aware that there are as many as 300 sewers discharging up to One Billion Gallons of partially treated sewage into the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and its associated waterways which is racking up waste water discharge fines and lawsuits due to significant amounts of Ammonia and other toxins. This water is being

Q-2

discharged into and polluting our communities drinking aquifer as well as others.

Is it not true that the California Regional Water Quality Control Board can fine septic discharge as well as Sewer Discharge ?

This is why I propose a Zero Waste Water Discharge Sewer Exempt System. One in which is low cost, Zero pollution, and low maintenance.

**Best Regards,
Dave Mahaffey
Action Pumping, Inc.
1(760)365-0861
actionpumpinginc@yahoo.com**

Q-2
Cont.

Q-3